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ABSTRACT

Most large and mid-size cities suffer from alarming numbers of high school drop-outs. One man decided to do something about his city's high drop-out rate: He started the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP), an independent, public, middle school for teenagers at risk of dropping out. The details of that program are outlined here. The text relays the stories of the program's director, its students, and its teachers to explain how and why this school succeeds. The emphasis is on the school's fourth year of operation--a snapshot of life in the school. The narrative explores the school's five distinguishing components: (1) its operation as an independent legal entity with total control over all aspects of its operation; (2) its emphasis on individualized instruction; (3) the required involvement of teachers in virtually all aspects of the school; (4) the degree of responsibility given to all students; and (5) the school's strong relationship with the private sector. Each of these components, as well as the other elements that constitute UCAP, are illustrated through personal vignettes as the text follows the students and personnel through their days. (RJM)

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